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AN

ANSWER

TO THE

DISQUISITION

ON

GOVERNMENT and CIVIL LIBERTY, &c.

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ON

GOVERNMENT and CIVIL LIBERTY;

IN A

LETTER

TO THE AUTHOR OF

DISQUISITIONS

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

LONDON:

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BRITISH MUSEUM

ANSWER, &c.

SIR,

I Yeſterday read your Diſquiſitions on ſeveral Subjects: I paſs over them all without animadverſion, except the ſeventh, which you have entitled — on government and civil liberty — nor would this have attracted my notice, but from its tendency to diſſeminate principles *abſurd*, *falſe*, *miſchievous*, *as inconſiſtent with common-ſenſe as with all human ſociety*. If you think theſe are hard terms, you muſt be

content to ſubmit to them; they are not of my coinage; they bear the ſtamp of your own authority, for they are the very terms you have thought proper to beſtow on thoſe who differ from you in opinion.

I make no queſtion of your ſincerity in what you write, nor do I queſtion your ability, but you have given every body great occaſion to queſtion your modeſty and good manners; the principles of Locke and Lord Somers, of Hooker, and of Puffendorf, to ſay nothing of living authors, as honeſt and as intelligent, probably, as yourſelf, deſerved to be treated with reſpect; harſh language is a diſgrace to a good cauſe, and the worſt cannot

ſupport

ſupport a bad one: I will endeavour not to imitate your example.

You have undertaken to ſubvert the principles of Mr. Locke and his diſciples by ridicule and by reaſon; your ridicule is miſplaced, and your reaſoning is inconcluſive: Your ridicule is miſplaced, for the ſubject is of great importance; whether your reaſoning be inconcluſive or not, let the public judge.

You have reduced your adverſaries principles of government to the five following propoſitions:

I. That all men are born equal.

II. That all men are born free.

III. That all government is derived from the people.

 IV. That

IV. That all government is a compact between the governors and the governed.

V. That no government ought to laſt any longer than it continues to be of equal advantage to the two contracting parties; that is, to the governed, as to the governors.

I acknowledge that moſt of theſe propoſitions are fairly and perſpicuouſly ſtated; and I hope to ſhew that you have no other merit in treating them.

That all men are born equal. — This is the firſt propoſition which you are determined to demoliſh; but you do not ſeem to me, from the nature of your attack, to comprehend

hend its meaning; if you cannot admit its truth, except upon the poor quibble of all men being equally born, you had better deny it altogether. You ſpeak of the different ſituations in which men are born with reſpect to beauty, health, wiſdom, genius, fortunes, and honours, and profeſs that you cannot underſtand how they can be ſaid to be born equal; — nor was there ever a man of common ſenſe who could underſtand it; nor can you produce a ſingle author of any credit, or of no credit, from Ariſtotle to the newſpaper politicians of the preſent times, who ever contended that men were born to this kind of equality. No, Sir, the ſtate of equality we ſpeak of is quite a different

ferent thing; it is that ſtate "wherein all power and juriſdiction is reciprocal, no one having more than another," it reſpects that freedom from ſubordination, which, antecedent to civil compact, belongs to every individual of our ſpecies, who is arrived at years of diſcretion; it has not the moſt diſtant relation to one man's being two feet taller, or twice as ſtrong as another; the tall man may overlook the little man, but he has not thereby acquired the right of prohibiting him the uſe of his eyes; the ſtrong man may overcome the weak one in a ſingle combat, but that gives him no right to commence it; he can have no right to kick and cuff his fellow, becauſe he may be able to do it with impunity.

Power,

Power, wealth, and wiſdom may be the means of introducing a ſubordination amongſt mankind, but this ſubordination muſt be *voluntary* on one ſide, or it will be nothing but *unjuſt force*, *rank tyranny*, on the other. You are born a duke, marquis, earl, viſcount, baron, or what is more deſpotic than all theſe put together, a tory country gentleman; you have power enough to do a peaſant, or a mechanic, any poor plebeian, an injury; — but did your birth, when it gave you the power, give you alſo the right of doing it. You are born to wealth; thank your anceſtors for your good fortune, but do not think that it entitles you to domineer over him who was born to none. You are poſſeſſed of a great natural genius, your brain has been caſt

caſt in a better mould than that of your neighbour; thank God for your intellectual pre-eminence; uſe your wiſdom for your own benefit and the good of others; but leave them to be judges of that good; they may have no reliſh for the good which your wiſdom may point out; you can be no judge of their feelings, can have no right to compel them to be wiſe in your way, againſt their will.

But this natural freedom from ſubordination, and that is the equality contended for, is ſo clear that no more need be ſaid on the ſubject, and you yourſelf ſeem to admit it, when you aſk, — "but, ſuppoſing they were all born equal, would this prove what is always intended

tended to be proved by it, that they ought always to continue ſo?" — Intended! by whom? I never yet ſaw a writer on the ſubject who had any intention of the kind. You again miſtake, I will not ſay miſrepreſent, for that implies a principle of which I hope you are incapable; but you miſtake the meaning of your opponents, and diſplay your valour in fighting a phantom of your own forming. Who has ever ſaid that men, becauſe they were born equal, *ought*, were under an obligation, to continue equal? Becauſe we do not grant that any man has a *natural* right to rule over another, muſt we of neceſſity grant that he cannot have an adventitious one? You have no right to rule me,

nor have I any right to rule you; we are at this inſtant in a ſtate of equality with reſpect to each other, the next may introduce a ſtate of ſubordination; for my own advantage I make an agreement with you, for a ſum of money, or other conſideration, I give you a right to diſpoſe of my time and labour; I am no longer your equal, but it was my own voluntary act which made me your inferior. Men are born equal; for their own advantage, for the ſake of enjoying peace and protection, they elect a magiſtrate; they are no longer his equals, but it was their own voluntary act which made them his inferiors; and they *ought*, (if that be the meaning of your *ought*) they

ought

ought to be permitted to continue equal till they have conſtituted to themſelves a ſuperior. — You triumphantly aſk, " muſt no man *aſſume* power over another becauſe they were born equal?" I plainly tell you, no — he muſt not; — if he does, he *aſſumes* what he has no right to: God has not given him the right, man cannot give it him; nor can he acquire it by any other means than the conceſſion of him over whom it is to be exerted. This conceſſion is the only firm and true principle of civil ſubordination; it will laſt, and bow down a man's neck to the *voluntary* yoke of legal government, when the ſtruggles to ſhake off an *involuntary* bondage, ſhall burſt into a thouſand

pieces the chains of deſpotiſm. Thus may you ſee that this mighty argument, drawn from the equality of mankind, by which all powers and principalities are eſtabliſhad on their ſureſt baſes, is entirely true, and cannot be too often or too ſolemnly introduced, eſpecially when "*many abſurd principles concerning government* and ſlavery, *have of late been diſſeminated with unuſual induſtry.*"

That all men are born free — is the ſecond propoſition which offends you. I think the proof of this is included in that of the former: For, if all men are born equal to each other, with reſpect to their want of power over each other, they certainly muſt be equally free: where

where there is no *natural* ſubordination, there can be no *natural* government, for government of every kind implies ſubordination, and where there is no natural government there is natural freedom. In your endeavours to refute this propoſition, you have not, indeed, trifled with Sir Robert Filmer, by attempting to prove that men are not born naturally free, from children being born in ſubjection to their parents, or in deriving royal deſpotic authority from the paternal authority of Adam, you have not plagued your readers with this ſolemn nonſenſe; but you certainly do trifle with their patience, in proving the little claim man can have to freedom, from his being confined

in

in the womb, ſwathed by his nurſe, flogged by his ſchoolmaſter, or hanged by his magiſtrate. All this is humour, but it is not argument: it is wit, but without judgment: I cannot employ my time in refuting it. — You grow ſerious, and repreſent a factious and turbulent diſpoſition, and an impatience of controul, as diſqualifying a man from being a member of a future celeſtial community. — So, then, the affair is quite over with us, both here and hereafter: The Tories only are to go to heaven: they have long ſhut the door of St. James in the face of the Whigs, and they think that St. Peter will be their porter, and perform the ſame ſervice for them in an higher place. Sad reaſoning this!

this! Is every man who raiſes a tumult, to tumble from his throne a tyrant or an uſurper unfit for heaven? Is every man who groans when he is oppreſſed, or kicks when he is unjuſtly goaded, turbulent and unfit for heaven? Is an impatience of controul, which may neither be directed by wiſdom, nor prompted by goodneſs, nor founded in juſtice, to be proſcribed as unfit for the communion of the bleſſed? On this ſuppoſition what muſt become of St. Paul and the apoſtles, and all the Chriſtian martyrs? they were men of turbulent diſpoſitions, for they turned the world upſide down! Be a little charitable, I beſeech you, and do not ſo haſtily conſign to the company of the devil and his angels,

gels, thoſe *factious* men, lords ſpiritual and temporal, knights and citizens, gentlemen and yeomen, who were *impatient of the controul* of James the Second, and who by that very impatience have ſeated the Houſe of *Hanover* on the throne of *Great-Britain.*

That all government is derived from the people — is the third propoſition, which you take upon you to pronounce to be entirely falſe. I do not ſee that you bring any proof of what you aſſert, or refer us to any other origin of government. All government, you ſay, is power, with which ſome are *intruſted* to controul the actions of others. — Agreed — but tell us by whom they are intruſted with this

power. Truſt is a relative term; it implies at leaſt two perſons, him who truſts, as well as him who is truſted; the governors you ſay are the perſons intruſted, but you do not mention the perſons who intruſt. We ſay, the people are the perſons who intruſt; this you deny, but you do not ſubſtitute any other perſon in the place of the people. Perhaps, in your language, the governors *aſſumed* this truſt, that is, they took it by force or by fraud; had they aſſumed your horſe or your coat in the ſame way, I verily believe you would have ſaid, they ought to have been hanged for their aſſumption; and yet, an aſſumption of power over your liberty and life is of more conſe-

quence to your felicity and well-being, than a thouſand coats or horſes. Perhaps they aſſumed it by divine appointment; let them produce their title to it, and ſhew us, that God has conveyed by a deed of truſt the lives and fortunes of millions of his creatures to be diſpoſed of by the arbitrary wills of any of the ſons of Adam: It is lucky for the defenders of this doctrine, that *Sir Robert Filmer's Patriarcha* has not yet been thrown into the flames by the common hangman. God, we acknowledge it with thankfulneſs and humility, has an unlimited right over us; he has formed us with capacities for happineſs which cannot be fully attained without ſociety, and ſociety

cannot ſubſiſt without ſome being intruſted with power to controul the actions of others; in this way government, as well as every other conſtitution of nature, may be truly ſaid to be the appointment of God; but what has this to do with the form of any particular government, with the degree of truſt, the extent of the controul neceſſary for the exiſtence of government? theſe we know are infinitely various in different countries; and we contend, that in all *juſt* governments, the people have delegated to their governors the particular degree of truſt with which they are inveſted, have limited the extent of the controul to which they are to be ſubjected. This truth forces itſelf upon your own mind, its

power is great, you cannot reſiſt it; you acknowledge in its full extent all that the warmeſt of your opponents ever contended for; and you acknowledge it in the very place where you are reaſoning againſt it. In one page you ſay, that "the inference uſually drawn from this propoſition (that all government is derived from the people) is utterly falſe; which is, that, becauſe all government is derived from the people, the people have a right to reſume it, and adminiſter it themſelves whenever they pleaſe." In the oppoſite page you acknowledge, "that the people in every country have a right to reſiſt manifeſt grievances and oppreſſions, to *change* their governors, and even their conſtitu-

ſtitution, on great and extraordinary occaſions." Now what does this amount to, but a right to reſume and adminiſter the government as they ſhall ſee fit, and whenever they are *pleaſed* to think the occaſion great and extraordinary? for if they are pleaſed to think it ſo, it is ſo in effect; their thinking it ſo does not make it ſo, but the conſequence muſt be the ſame as if it was ſo; the governed may be in an error in thinking any particular occaſion great and extraordinary, or the governors may be in an error in thinking it not ſo; but there being no judge on earth to decide which is in the right, the actions of both ſides muſt be the ſame as if both were in the right. Thus you acknow-

knowledge, with the moſt zealous Lockian amongſt us, the abſtract right of the people; as to the practicability of exerciſing it, that is quite another queſtion, in the deciſion of which a great many circumſtances may ariſe, which cannot be foreſeen in ſpeculation or generally eſtimated; it was exerciſed at the Revolution; and we truſt that there will never, in this country, be occaſion to exerciſe it again; for we hope, and are perſuaded, that the wiſdom of the Houſe of Hanover will keep at an awful diſtance from the throne, men profeſſing principles which have levelled with the duſt the Houſe of Steuart.

You are very ſevere upon thoſe, whom you are pleaſed to call our modern

dern demagogues, becauſe they have not explained to your ſatisfaction what they mean by the terms "the people." You repreſent them, injuriouſly enough, as excluding from that denomination the peers of the realm, and the repreſentatives of the people, the paſtors of the church, and the ſages of the law, the magiſtrates, the land-holders, the ſtock-holders, and the merchants, as expecting public ſpirit from the garrets of Grub-ſtreet, reformation from the purlieus of St. Giles, a Solon from the tin-mines of Cornwall, and a Lycurgus from the coal-pits of Newcaſtle. This is mere declamation, if not ſomething worſe, defamation. I never heard, nor, I will take upon me to ſay, did you ever

ever hear any one of the demagogues you ſpeak of, annexing to the terms "the people," the ſenſe you have here repreſented them as annexing. Your imagination has in this, as in other parts of your Diſquiſition, run away with your good ſenſe; your deſcription is lively, but it is not juſt; you may have ſupported your point, but you will have ruined, with thinking men, the opinion they might have been diſpoſed to entertain of your candour. But that you may not be at a loſs to know what your modern demagogues underſtand by the people; I will tell you what the Prince of Orange underſtood by them, for that, I take it, is the ſenſe in which they underſtand the terms, and in which every

every man of ſenſe muſt underſtand them. The Prince explains his ſentiment, in the 25th paragraph of his declaration, wherein he invites and requires *all perſons whatſoever*, (here is no excluſion even of tinners and colliers) all the peers of the realm, both ſpiritual and temporal, all lords, lieutenants, deputy-lieutenants, and all gentlemen, citizens, and other *commons of all ranks*, to come and aſſiſt him in the execution of his deſign, to re-eſtabliſh the conſtitution of the Engliſh government.

We come to the fourth propoſition, that all government is a compact between the governors and the governed.—You would have better expreſſed our meaning had

you put into your propoſition one little word more, and inſtead of all government, ſaid, all *juſt* government; for none of us are ſo ignorant as not to know the effects of conqueſt and violence, of circumvention and fraud, in the infringement or ſubverſion of natural rights.

You have the modeſty to ſtile all that has been written on this ſubject, by men of the moſt comprehenſive intellects, and the deepeſt penetration, "*a ridiculous fiction, intended* only to ſubvert all government, and let mankind looſe to prey upon each other." I do not believe that any one of thoſe, in any age or country, who have embraced the opinion in queſtion,

ever

ever entertained the leaſt particle of that *intention* which you have, with ſo much liberality, and ſo little delicacy, attributed to them all. I can certainly, however, anſwer for one of the chief ſupporters of this doctrine, that he had no *intention* to ſubvert government. Hear his own words when he is ſpeaking of the papers which contained the beginning and end of his Treatiſe of Government; "Theſe (papers) which remain, I hope, are ſufficient to *eſtabliſh* the throne of our great reſtorer, our preſent king William; to make *good* his title in the *conſent* of the people; which, being the only one of all *lawful* governments, he has more fully and clearly than any prince in

Chriſtendom." I have ſo great an opinion of Mr. Locke's ſincerity, that I cannot believe he ſpeaks of a *ridiculous fiction*, when he derives the title of king William to the throne, from the conſent of the people, and prefers it to that of every other prince in Chriſtendom. I cannot believe that he *intended* to *ſubvert* all government, becauſe he ſays, he hoped not to ſubvert, but to *eſtabliſh* the throne of our great reſtorer. It would be eaſy to purſue this matter, and to ſhew that all the other diſtinguiſhed patrons of a ſocial compact had as little intention to let mankind looſe to prey upon each other as Mr. Locke had.

You call this compact a fiction; an hundred inſtances might be produced of its reality, both in the hiſtory of our own and other countries, and the coronation-oath ſtill ſubſiſts as a proof of it. But meaning to make this Anſwer as ſhort as poſſible, I will not take up your time on this head, but refer you to the eighth chapter of the ſecond book of Mr. Locke's Treatiſe on Government; and to a little book which has either never fallen into your hands, or you have forgotten its contents, and from the peruſal of which, you will ſee abundant reaſon to retract your haſty aſſertion, that a compact between the people and their rulers is a ridiculous fiction. This book

is intitled, The Judgment of whole Kingdoms and Nations, concerning the Rights, Power, and Prerogative of Kings, and the Rights, Privileges, and Properties of the People. This book is ſaid to be the work of Lord Somers; but whether it be ſo or not, I do not enquire; certain I am, that the learning and good reaſoning contained in it would have done honour to him, or any other man.

In treating this fourth propoſition, you ſeem not to comprehend its meaning; it is painful to me to make this remark;—on any other ſubject you would have reaſoned better; but this is a ſubject which requires deep and ſerious reflection, more than a brilliancy of fancy

fancy or expreſſion. " Compact, you ſay, is repugnant to the very nature of government, whoſe eſſence is compulſion." The eſſence of government, *after it is eſtabliſhed*, is compulſion; but the eſſence of the eſtabliſhment of government is compact, tacit, or expreſs. Theſe are quite different things; you will preſently underſtand the diſtinction. Suppoſe an hundred common ſailors to be ſhipwrecked upon an iſland inhabited by ſavages, it is evident that there is no manner of government amongſt theſe men; ſome may be taller, or ſtronger, or younger, or wiſer, than the reſt, but ſtill they are all equal to each other with reſpect to ſubordination; no one has any authority to regulate

regulate the actions of his fellow. For mutual preſervation they will ſoon wiſh to withdraw themſelves from this ſtate of equality, and, in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word, anarchy; they will elect a leader; the wiſeſt probably and the boldeſt man amongſt them, will, by their common ſuffrage, be made their governor; and, in order that this governor may be of uſe to them, they will promiſe to obey him whilſt he acts for the common good. Now begins compulſion, but it is compulſion ariſing from conſent and compact; it is in its exiſtence *ſubſequent* to the eſtabliſhment of that government of which it conſtitutes the eſſence.

You ſay, by way of invalidating the notion of compact, that "if every man had a right to ſurrender his independence on bargain, he muſt have an equal right to retain it." I admit that he has that right, but it is a right which his intereſt will not ſuffer him to retain for any length of time; or if he does retain it, it muſt be at his own peril. Suppoſe one of our hundred ſailors ſhould refuſe to elect any leader, that one is in a ſtate of natural independence with reſpect to all the reſt; the leader has no authority over him; he is at liberty to protect himſelf, by his own ſtrength, from the attacks of ſavages and wild beaſts; but a very few days experience would con-

vince him, that his protection would be better ſecured by an hundred arms than by one; he would ſoon be induced to become a member of that community into which the reſt had entered; he would be *induced* to it, but he ought not to be *compelled* to it.

You ſeem to apprehend that robberies, and murders, rapine and bloodſhed, would univerſally take place if this right of retaining their independence belonged to mankind; this is an idle fear. Men would not retain it, becauſe it would be for their intereſt to give it up; they would not retain it, becauſe, inſtead of their not being amenable to any human tribunal for their enormities, as you aſſert, they

they would be anſwerable for them to every man they met. Every man would have a right to kill a murderer, to apprehend a robber, and to inflict an adequate puniſhment upon every other violator of the law of nature. This right which, in the words of Mr. Locke, "every man hath to puniſh the offender, and to be the executioner of the law of nature," removes at once all the abſurdities you think your opponents have fallen into; and had you read often, and thoroughly digeſted, the writings of that great man, who ſtands unmoved as a rock of adamant amid the frothy ebullitions of cenſure which have of late been levelled at his principles,

you would neither have been ſo free in the uſe of ſuch unbecoming terms, as abſurdities, ridiculous fictions, extravagant principles, fallacious propoſitions, &c. nor have thereby ſet an example which the writer of this Letter diſdains to imitate, though you have afforded him abundant opportunity of doing it with ſucceſs.

That no government ought to ſubſiſt any longer than it continues to be of equal advantage to the governed as to the governors. — This is the laſt propoſition which has become the object of your animadverſion; it is not ſo clearly ſtated as the preceding ones; nor does your attempt to refute it, render it more intelligible; it

makes

makes a diſtinction where there ought to be no difference; it intimates that the advantage of a governor may be different from that of the governed, whereas they ought always to be the ſame; but ſhould the caſe happen to be otherwiſe, who can have any heſitation in ſaying, that the advantage of the governor will be as light as air, when weighed againſt that of the people; the *ſalus populi* is, and ought to be, the ſupreme law. Conſider the advantage which each of the contracting parties expects to enjoy. The people look for the protection of their perſons and properties, not only from foreign and domeſtic violence, but from the encroachments of the prince himſelf.

ſelf. The prince expects pre-eminence; it a may be a painful pre-eminence, but he deems it deſireable, and accepts it. Put the pre-eminence of the prince, and the means of ſuſtaining it, to become incompatible with the protection of the people and the common ſafety, and ſhew us, if you can, the nature of the chain which, in ſuch a circumſtance, will bind the people to their prince; it will be a chain unjuſtly formed, by the will of one, to gall the necks of millions. The ſtanding armies of France, or Spain, or Ruſſia, or Pruſſia, or Germany, or Turkey, may rivet it in their reſpective countries, but in all of them (for all theſe kinds of government are

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the offsprings of force or fraud) according to your own moſt juſt, candid, and liberal conceſſion, "the people have an equal right to preſerve or regain their liberty whenever they are able." Whoſe principles now, think you, lay a foundation for ſedition, treaſon, tumult, rebellion, and ſubverſion of government? Thoſe of the man who aſſerts, that "all the governments we ſee (no exception, you perceive, for our own) are the offſprings of force or fraud, of accident, and the circumſtances of the times, and muſt perpetually change with thoſe circumſtances; that in all of them, the people have an equal right to preſerve or regain their liberty whenever they are able."

able;" or thoſe of him who contends, that the Houſe of Hanover reigns here by the conſent of the people, and that whilſt it maintains the conditions on which it was exalted to the throne inviolate, the compact ought to be perpetual.

You have not well explained the nature of the advantage which governors and the governed derive from the inſtituted relation which they bear to each other; it does not conſiſt in the poſſeſſing, or not poſſeſſing, wealth and power. The pooreſt man has ſome property; he has a perſon at leaſt which he wiſhes to protect from violence. It is the ſecurity of this little property, the protection of limb and life

life from pain and extinction, which conſtitute the advantage he hopes to obtain by entering into ſociety; he knows that wealth either deſcends from anceſtry, is flung into his lap by Fortune, or is to be acquired by induſtry; he expects that government will ſecure to him the poſſeſſion of what he can honeſtly get, but he is not wild enough to expect that it will put him in poſſeſſion of what does not belong to him. The principal advantage which the governor derives from his ſtation, is the conſciouſneſs of diſcharging his high truſt with fidelity. His power of executing, or even of ordaining laws, of making war or peace, of conferring honours or rewarding merit; theſe

and other apdendages of his high office, can be of no ſort of advantage to him as an individual, except ſo far as they are exerted in perfect coincidence with the advantage of the community, as they enable him to fulfil the greateſt of all human duties, the duty of the ſupreme magiſtrate to the people, over whom he preſides. In the diſcuſſion of this laſt queſtion I really expected, for the ſubject naturally led to it, that you would have taken a larger field, that you would have entered upon our Iriſh or American diſputes, and ſhewn that it was the duty of both theſe people to have ſuffered our government over them to ſubſiſt, when the advantages reſulting to them

the governed, and to us the governors, were no longer equal, or, which may be as true, were thought to be no longer equal: I expected that you would have cleared up a doubt which has occupied the minds of our beſt politicians,—whether men have a natural right, a civil right is nothing to the purpoſe, to withdraw themſelves from any civil community, when they are of opinion they can better ſecure to themſelves the advantages of civil ſociety elſewhere. Had you taken ſuch a route as this, you might probably have bewildered me in brakes and thickets; I might have loſt both ſight and ſcent of you; but as you have contented yourſelf with running on in the

beaten track; there is no need why upon this occaſion; I ſhould entangle myſelf in thorns and briers which lie out of my way.

Having done with the propoſitions, you come to general obſervations, and deſcend, I fear, from reaſoning to railing, for what other name will the world give to the following extract, — "In ſhort, all theſe wild and extravagant principles are the production of *ignorance* or *ambition*, invented and propagated, either by thoſe who are unacquainted with human nature and human government, or thoſe who endeavour to render it impracticable in the hands of others, that it may fall into their own." — I can hardly forbear the uſe of ſome

of

of *your* appellations. — Conſider, Sir, what you have ſaid; — were all thoſe illuſtrious men, who by the moſt conſummate virtue, and at the hazard of every thing that was dear to them, accompliſhed the Revolution, *ignorant* or *ambitious?* Are the lords and commons of the preſent times, their number is not ſmall, who reſolutely maintain thoſe principles, *ignorant* or *ambitious?* Is there not one grain of public virtue, one ſpark of pure patriotiſm amongſt them? Are they diſtinguiſhed by nothing but *ignorance* or *ambition?* Do you think that they are not as well acquainted with human nature and human government as yourſelf? Muſt every man be a fool or a knave, ignorant

of

of mankind, or deſirous of rendering government impracticable in the hands of others, that it may fall into his own, who cannot ſubſcribe to the political creed of the author of Diſquiſitions on ſeveral Subjects?

But you ſeem to me to entertain a bad opinion of human kind; this appears in many parts of your Diſquiſition, but in none more remarkably than where you ſay you are perſuaded, that if an angel were ſent from heaven, veſted with irreſiſtible power to govern any country upon earth, and was to execute his commiſſion with the utmoſt degree of wiſdom, juſtice, and benevolence, his dominions would very ſoon be deſerted by moſt of the inhabitants; who would rather chooſe to

ſuffer

ſuffer mutual injuries and oppreſſions, however grievous, under any government in which they themſelves had a ſhare, than to be compelled to be virtuous and happy by any ſuperior authority whatever." What, if I ſhould ſimply ſay, that compulſion and happineſs could not exiſt together, there would be an end of your fine period; and yet it is true, you may as ſoon compel a man not to feel compulſion, as to be happy when he is compelled to be ſo. But the whole obſervation is without foundation; I conceive, that in the government you deſcribe there would not be a ſingle murmur, there would be no compelling men to be virtuous, they would be virtuous out of choice; their

their virtue would conſiſt in a perfect obedience to this angel, and they could have no temptation to be diſobedient. The angel, on your ſuppoſition, would have the utmoſt wiſdom to provide for the happineſs of each individual, the utmoſt benevolence to induce him to make this proviſion, and irreſiſtible power to effect his purpoſe. Shew me in all the world a prince with the perfections of this angel, and I will ſhew you a people happy, content, grateful, and obedient, even to a degree beyond the paſſive conceptions of the moſt determined Tory.

I have not wilfully miſrepreſented any thing you have ſaid, or deſignedly treated you with diſreſpect;

pect; I have, therefore, no apologies to make to you on that ſcore; but I ought to beg your pardon for my preſumption on another. — I have indulged a fond hope, that by printing this *Brochure* in the manner I have done, it may have ſome chance of arreſting the curioſity of poſterity, by its exiſtence being continued to it under the covering and protection of your book; that the feeble antidote it contains may reſtore the conſtitution of ſome Whig ſuccumbing under the virulence of your poiſon, when this mortal coil ſhall be no more, and the authors of the poiſon and its antidote ſhall ſleep in peace.

London, March 16, 1782.

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